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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MASERU 000174

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/S, EEB/TRA/OTP (DORIS HAYWOOD), PM/ISO (JEFF FREDERICK), IO, G/TIP (RACHEL YOUSEY); DEFENSE FOR OSD (DAVE GRUBER)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EWWT](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [EFIS](#) [PHUM](#)
MOPS, SENV, SMIG, PGOV, PREL, ASEC, KCRM, KWMN, LT
SUBJECT: LESOTHO: DEMARCHE ON TIP, MARITIME ISSUES, AND FAO CANDIDATE

REF: A) STATE 58359; B) STATE 50488; AND C) STATE 50336

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¶1. SUMMARY: On June 12, Poloffs met with Mr. Yengane from the Europe and Americas Desk in the Lesotho Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the 2008 TIP report, the Global Maritime Partnership, and the U.S. FAO candidate. Regarding the TIP report, Mr. Yengane appeared more interested in Lesotho's relative standing to other African countries than the meaning of Lesotho's continuing "special case" status. He said that he would need to consult with other ministries on the question of the Global Maritime Partnership, but noted that it may be hard for this landlocked country to concentrate on maritime issues. He claimed that providing Lesotho's support for the U.S. FAO candidate should be "no problem." He also remarked that the GOL plans to send several civil servants to serve as SADC election observers in Zimbabwe. END SUMMARY.

Lesotho's Continuing "Special Case"

TIP Status Doesn't Make Waves

¶2. On June 12, Poloffs met with Mr. Yengane from the Europe and Americas Desk in the Lesotho Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In response to a demarche on the 2008 trafficking in persons report (Ref A), Mr. Yengane appeared unfazed by Lesotho's continuing classification as a "special case" country. He was aware of U.S. methodology regarding TIP rankings, and was eager to know the ranking of other African states in this year's report.

Global Maritime Partnership:

"We'll Get Back To You"

¶3. Regarding the Global Maritime Partnership initiative (Ref B), Mr. Yengane stated that he would need to consult with other ministries, including the Ministries of Trade and Home Affairs, before giving further comment on Lesotho attitude towards the Global Maritime Partnership. He mentioned that, as a landlocked country, Lesotho did not regard maritime security as a current focus area. However, he did recognize the importance of maritime safety generally for Lesotho's exporters.

FAO Candidate -- "No Problem"

¶4. Regarding the U.S. candidate for Chairperson of the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (Ref C), Mr. Yengane expressed his confidence that Lesotho would support Dr. Karen Hulebak. He noted that he would contact the appropriate decision makers and said it should be "no problem" to provide such support. He said that he intended to reestablish contact with Poloff next week with further word on the matter.

Zimbabwe: Lesotho Will Send Observers

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¶5. Unrelated to the three demarches delivered, Mr. Yengane mentioned that the GOL would send a team of civil servants as SADC election observers in the upcoming runoff election in Zimbabwe. He shared USG concerns about the election environment, and said that he was uncertain if polling would be free and fair and if it would produce a definitive winner.

¶6. COMMENT: Mr. Yengane, always a talkative interlocutor, only spoke with certainty when it came to Dr. Hulebak's FAO nomination. Despite Lesotho's heavy use of maritime routes for its exports, it may be difficult to break past the perception that, as a landlocked nation, maritime issues are not Lesotho's business. It was reassuring to hear that Lesotho plans to send election observers to Zimbabwe, but as they will be civil servants, the GOL's general desire to remain in sync with a SADC consensus on Zimbabwe might influence their observations. END COMMENT.

MURPHY